

Who is the "He" that Hinders?

Is there any evidence for a pre-tribulation rapture? One word in the Greek text contains the answer. Break out your Strong's concordance for this one, brothers and sisters.

A word study can be a powerful tool for answering the questions surrounding difficult or even controversial issues. For example, there has been a great deal of speculation and concern in regard to the antichrist. Who is he? Is he alive today? Another area of concern involves the constant debate of a Pre, Mid, or Post tribulation Rapture of the church.

Though I had struggled for several years over these questions, it is interesting to see that my answers were found in the study of *one* word in II Thessalonians 2:7,

For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.

This verse tells us that the antichrist will not be revealed until someone or something is taken out of his way. When this hindering someone or something is taken out, an explosion of evil will burst forth. The "hinderer" is like a cork holding back the contents of a shaken bottle of warm champagne. The question is: Who or what is this cork that is blocking this evil rampage?

Many speculations have been made regarding this question. Some say it is the Church, yet the Church has been described as the bride of Christ. This verse is written in masculine terms and the "bride" is obviously feminine. So, it must be the Holy Spirit, yet we see clearly that the Holy Spirit is working within the tribulation leading a multitude to salvation.¹ The only other alternative would be Michael the archangel, but we have no evidence that he is even involved here.

It is no wonder that so much speculation and confusion has resulted from this particular passage. Yet Paul wrote this passage assuming the reader understood who this hindering agent is. The reader in Paul's day had the advantage of a firm grasp of the Greek language. If we were to read this passage as *they* would see it, there would be no question in our mind who or what the "hinderer" is.

Let us take a closer look at II Thessalonians 2:7,

For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is **taken** out of the way.

Highlighted in bold is the word that can answer all of our questions. To find these answers, you will need the use of a Strong's concordance.

¹ Ref. Revelation 7

THE REFERENCE NUMBER - GREEK

The word *taken* in Greek is found in the Strongs concordance as reference number 1096 or *ginomai*. This word has an incredible flexibility and color. It is used many times in the New Testament and each application describes a different hue and shade. By examining each passage where this word is used and comparing it with Thessalonians, we will find the identity of the "He" that is hindering.

Before we begin our word study, understand that sometimes one word can have multiple meanings. For example, our English word *play* may be a dramatic presentation, kids having fun or performing on a musical instrument. In another language, *play* may be labeled with three completely different words. *Ginomai* is a Greek word with many meanings in the English, so do not let this confuse you.

GINOMAI

Our first use of the word *ginomai* is from a quote by Jesus.

"Salt is good, but if the salt loses its **flavor**, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another." Mark 9:50

Here, *ginomai* is used as the word "flavor" (or saltiness). Jesus identifies the idiom of salt in Matt 5:13 at the Sermon on the Mount,

"You [The Church] are the **salt** of the earth ... "

MUSTERING THE TROOPS

The clearest reason why Paul used this particular word is in light of his earlier letter to the Thessalonians. In I Thessalonians 4:14-17 we read,

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."

We also read in I Corinthians 15:51-53,

"...Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

These two scriptures contain several points concerning the Rapture of the Church.

1. There will be the *thundering* voice of the Lord bidding us to come.
... descend from heaven with a shout.
2. There will be the *awakening* of those who are asleep
... And the dead in Christ will rise first.
3. Those who are alive on earth at this time will be raptured or *vanish*.
... we who are alive and remain shall be caught up.
4. We will *assemble* with them in the air.
... caught up together with them in the clouds.
5. We will be *altered* from corruptible to incorruptible.
... we shall all be changed.

THE SHOUT

At the time of the Rapture of the Church, there is to be a shout. This shout will be like the voice of an archangel. Let us see how the word *ginomai* correlates with this in John 12:29,

Therefore the people who stood by and heard [the voice of God] said that it had *thundered*. Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him."

Here we see *ginomai* used as a description of the voice of an angel or like the thundering voice of the archangel. Could this be the same voice seen in the passage of I Thessalonians? For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God.

THE AWAKENING

In Acts 16:27 we find our word used again.

And the keeper of the prison, *awaking* from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself.

Ginomai is used in this context as awakening out of sleep. Could this point to believers who have died in Christ awaiting the glorious awakening described in I Thessalonians? For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

THE VANISHED

Luke 24:31 uses our Greek word as a description of the vanishing of Jesus Christ in His post resurrected body.

Then their eyes were opened and they knew [Jesus]; and He *vanished* from their sight.

Clearly we see that our word ginomai or "taken" is showing us a picture of the Rapture of the Church. When the Rapture occurs, it will result in the vanishing of thousands of saints. ... we shall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

THE ASSEMBLED

Our word ginomai can also be used to describe the assembly of people together as one body. We see this use of verbiage in Acts 15:25,

... it seemed good to us, being *assembled* with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul.

Once again, ginomai is used for the verb to assemble as one. This could easily describe our assembling together in the clouds as one body to meet Jesus. ... we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

THE ALTERED

Our last example has to do with being changed. Is the word ginomai specific on what kind of change will take place? Paul wrote a letter to the Corinthian church and explained how, at the time of the Rapture, the saints will be given a new body.² This new body will be like the post resurrected, glorified body of Jesus Christ. Ginomai does not fall short in this description, for we find it used in Luke 9:29.

And as [Jesus] prayed, the appearance of His face was *altered*, and His robe became white and glistening.

The word ginomai describes the transfiguration of the body of Jesus into a glorified state. Could this also describe the altered bodies we will receive at the moment of the Rapture? ...we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

² Ref. I Corinthians 15

In each of these examples, it is clear that ginomai is pointing to the Church of Jesus Christ. Can we conclude that the Church is that "hindering" force holding back the antichrist? We still have not solved the problem of the masculine "He" in the passage.

For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only *He* who now restrains will do so until *He* is taken out of the way.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Let us step away from the ginomai study for a moment. To identify the "He" in the previous verse, we must understand the role of the Holy Spirit in the body of the Church. We will start by taking a close look at John 14:16-17.

"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that *He* may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for *He* dwells with you and will be in you."

On the day of Pentecost, after Christ's resurrection, this promise was fulfilled; the Holy Spirit indwelt the believer.³ So when the "He" is taken out of the way, the Church will be caught up with Him. For the Holy Spirit and the Church are one.

A good analogy would be like adding water to dirt and working it into a clay substance and throwing it on a potter's wheel. The clay is worked and handled with skill until a desired vessel is formed. When completed, the pot is taken from the potter's wheel. But which are you taking; the water or the dirt? The answer is both, the water and the dirt have become one substance that is known as clay.

But now, O Lord, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You our potter; and all we are the work of Your hand. Isaiah 64:8

THE MARRIED

Let us return to our study and take one more look at our word ginomai in Romans 7:4.

Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be *married* to another, even to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.

Paul has made it clear that the Church is the chaste virgin bride of Christ.⁴ One day our Bridegroom will return for His bride. On that prescribed day we will enjoy a marriage feast and be joined together in marriage. Could our word ginomai or "taken" be a wedding term describing our being married to Christ?

³ Ref. Acts 2

⁴ Ref. 2 Corinthians 11:2

REVISED INTERPRETATION

If we were to have read II Thessalonians 2:7 as the inhabitants of that day, it may have been understood in this manner,

For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He has *thundered, awoken, vanished, altered, assembled, and married* out of the way.

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians in his first letter and told them of Christ returning and taking away His Church. This "Rapture" would take the form of a mass disappearance of Christians. False teachers came into the Thessalonian church and told them that the Rapture had already occurred. To console this fearful church; Paul wrote a second letter. In this second letter, Paul comforts them by saying that the tribulation will not take place till the antichrist shows up. The antichrist cannot show up until the "hinderer" is out of the way.

So Paul established the following sequence of events:

Step one: The rapture of the Church removes hindrance to evil.

Step two – The antichrist is revealed

Step three - The tribulation begins.

CONCLUSION

One word in the Greek text provides enough color to allow deeper insight into the text of scripture. How many more of these nuggets of gold exist within the mine of God's Word? In all your study, be confident that soon our Bridegroom will come and take us away. And in so doing, we will all participate in that glorious *ginomai!*